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C O N F I D E N T I A L KINSHASA 001940

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [MARR](#) [PGOV](#) [CG](#)

SUBJECT: ONGOING FARDC OPERATIONS TO IMPROVE SECURITY IN  
KATANGA

Classified By: PolCouns MSanderson, reasons 1.4 b/d.

1. (U) Despite some press reports suggesting otherwise, there has been no significant increase in the number of internally displaced persons in Katanga province, DRC. Ongoing government military operations (which began over 6 weeks ago) against Mai Mai elements headed by renegade leader Gideon apparently are close to drawing to a close, with Gideon and his remaining men (estimated at possibly 500-800) pretty much contained in one area of the northern part of the province. MONUC political officers (based in Lubumbashi, capital of Katanga province) are not sure where the widely-quoted figure of 50,000 persons supposedly displaced as a result of fighting comes from, but say that the total number of displaced likely is closer to 5,000 than 50,000.

2. (C) Comment: The operation against Gideon, a particularly vicious and uncontrollable thug, is long overdue. He and his men have been responsible for the rape and murder of hundreds of Congolese citizens in northern Katanga, and that number probably is considerably higher. It was Gideon's men, for instance, who attacked workers from Medecin Sans Frontiers and caused that organization to cease operations in the province. The government (through the local Vice Governor and the National Security Advisor) had tried to negotiate Gideon's surrender, but when he temporarily held one of the negotiators (a local priest) hostage, the talks broke down and the government decided on military action. The operation probably is being overseen by Air Force Commander General John Numbi, who has been in Lubumbashi for at least the last ten days, and is the man considered by the President to be responsible for military security in Katanga. Eliminating Gideon would be an important step in stabilizing the province in the run-up to the DRC's first democratic elections in 45 years, scheduled to take place early next year.  
DOUGHERTY